



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: LOCUST

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE LOCUST?

- You may remember reading it at your seder as one of the plagues.
- It's *arbeh* (ארבה).
- The root of the word is רבה, which means to become much, many, or great.

WHAT OTHER ANIMAL IS LIKE THE LOCUST?

- Can anyone teach us what it is that makes locusts different from grasshoppers?
- Locusts migrate, travel great distances, in swarms.
- Grasshoppers are mostly solitary and stay, more or less, in one place.
- What's the main thing that locusts do when migrating that greatly affects people? (They consume all the vegetation in their path.)

IF LOCUSTS EAT OUR FOOD, ARE WE PERMITTED TO EAT THEM AS FOOD—ARE THEY KOSHER?

- Yes! (Leviticus 11:21-22, Shabbat 90b)
- But they must have four feet, two hopping legs, and four wings that are large enough to cover the whole of their bodies.
- They are considered a good source of protein, fat, and mineral salt.
- Has anyone here ever eaten a locust and, if so, what did it taste like?

WHY DO YOU IMAGINE THAT OF ALL THE INSECTS, WHICH THE TORAH TEACHES US NOT TO EAT, THE LOCUST IS PERMITTED?

- Possibly because they came in such great swarms, it was impossible to avoid swallowing one by accident or to completely keep them out of cooking pots.
- Possibly locusts were permitted as food because they themselves are entirely vegetarian.
- Possibly they were permitted because after they ate all the crops, the people collected the dead locusts left behind, drying and preserving them as food since they had little else to eat.
- By the way, has anyone ever eaten chocolate-covered locusts?

IT'S TIME FOR THE LOCUST QUIZ!

- What's the only continent that doesn't have any migrating locusts? (Antarctica)

- How do locusts make their loud noise? (They rub their back legs on their front wings.)
- How many locusts are there when they swarm—hundreds of thousands, millions, or billions? (As many as billions.)
- Which animals are the natural enemies of the locust? (Birds)
- How do locusts protect themselves from birds? (A swarm of locusts make a noise that's so deafening, it frightens birds and keeps them from getting close to the locusts. The prophet Joel (2:5) described the noise of a swarm of locusts as "like the sound of chariots on the mountaintops. The locusts themselves are able to tolerate their own noise because their eardrums collapse temporarily, which keeps them from any injury.)

CAN ANYONE TEACH US WHY, ACCORDING TO OUR TRADITION, GOD BROUGHT A PLAGUE OF *LOCUSTS* UPON THE EGYPTIANS?

- The Egyptians had forced the Hebrews to plant fruit trees for them and then to guard the fruit, forbidding them to eat any of it.
- For this cruelty, God brought the locusts to eat what little was left of their fruit after the plague of hail, so the Egyptians would have none of the fruit themselves.
- When the plague of locusts first came upon the Egyptians, what do you think they did with them? (They put them in barrels and pickled them, to eat as a delicacy.)
- The Midrash (Exodus Rabbah 13:7) teaches us that God brought a very strong west wind that took up every last locust and carried them out to sea.
 1. What about those that they had pickled or were in their cooking pots?
 2. The Midrash says that they also "took wing and fled."



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